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BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY—

The Founders, the Builders and the Guardians

Part 1

SALIM ALI

(With four plates)

On the eventful completion of the 75th volume of the Society's *Journal* after an unbroken run of publication since its inception in 1886, it is pertinent to look back and take stock of the men who contributed to the building up of the prestige it now enjoys as a scientific periodical within the country and abroad. For a small private Society started by a tiny group of eight nature loving residents of Bombay in 1883 for 'exchanging notes, exhibiting interesting specimens, and otherwise encouraging one another'* to have risen to its present stature is a saga of achievement for gratification and pride. All the more praiseworthy is the success when it is remembered that the Society never was an affluent institution and has always had a hand-to-mouth existence, dependent more or less entirely on the modest annual subscriptions de-

rived from its regrettably meagre membership. How then was the Society able to achieve so much? This was surely due overwhelmingly to the sagacity and foresight of its dedicated Founders, Builders and Guardians—the men who were directly responsible for the conduct of its affairs over the years—and those who nurtured it with their pioneering attainments in the field of natural history, and with their original scientific contributions to its developing publication. All honour to these men, but who were they? To answer this question, and at this distance of time, I felt it would be worthwhile to research the obituaries that have been published in the *Journal* from the earliest days. Between the year 1903, when the first obituary appears in Vol. 14 (there are none in the preceding 13 volumes), and the latest in 1973 in Vol. 70—104 in all, though we know of some others who have escaped mention. They are notices chiefly of men who in various ways contributed significantly enough

* 'The Founders of the Bombay Natural History Society' by W. S. Millard, Vol. 35: 196.

to the reputation of the Society and the *Journal* to be remembered with special gratefulness. Apart from the persons responsible for the material well being of the Society, the Founders and the Builders, I have selected a number of others, the Guardians—scientists, field naturalists and sportsmen—who by their researches and their experiences and writings, or by their prowess as hunters, or their zeal as nature conservationists have aided substantially in the evolutionary process of the Society. Fortunately this category is not strictly confined to the names in the obituaries: we still have many living amongst us today who by their diverse benefactions are helping to add lustre to the Society and scientific prestige to its journal and thus to keep its image shining.

First priority in this Roll of Honour must of course be accorded to the Founders, and the Builders who followed them. The excerpts here culled from the obituary notices in the *Journal* deal mainly with the nature of their respective associations with the Society, but I have included such additional information as was readily available from other sources. For more biographical particulars the interested reader is referred to the *Journal*, (volume and page indicated in brackets after each name).

The Founders

EDWARD HAMILTON AITKEN ('EHA') 1851-1909
(Vol. 19: 540) by T. R. B(ell)

The son of a Scottish missionary, born in Satara and educated in Bombay. He served first in the Education Department and later in the Customs. He retired to Edinburgh in 1906 and died two years later of Bright's Disease.

EHA was one of the eight original founders of the Society in 1883 and co-editor with

R. A. Sterndale of the earliest issues of the *Journal*. He was interested in all branches of Zoology, but particularly so in birds and insects, chiefly butterflies. For many years he was in charge of the Society's Entomological Section, a position which he took over from Lionel de Nicéville on the latter's death in 1901. He had a special genius for seizing the striking and characteristic points in the appearance and behaviour of individual species, and a happy knack of translating them into print so as to render his descriptions unmistakable. He was a shrewd observer of humanity too as his book *BEHIND THE BUNGALOW* testifies. This book is an Anglo-Indian classic and will remain a lasting monument to the memory of the author. His first literary venture was entitled *THE TRIBES ON MY FRONTIER* describing the animals ordinarily met with in and around an Indian bungalow. Another book of his is *THE COMMON BIRDS OF BOMBAY* which treats of the birds met in the town of Bombay and its vicinity in a manner that makes it easy for anyone to recognize each individual when he sees it. A less known book *THE NATURALIST ON THE PROWL* written when he was in Kanara and 'full of the scent of the jungles' is perhaps less generally known. All his books are full of accurate knowledge pleasantly imparted, and with a quaint humour which cannot but appeal to the reader, and the joyousness of living which expresses so well the nature of the writer. Aitken was the first Honorary Secretary of the Society and continued as such till his departure from Bombay. The first number of the *Journal* was produced in January 1886. It met the need for putting on permanent record whatever was of value or interest transacted at the Society's meetings. In introducing the first number the editors expressed the hope that "The introduction of this Journal will stimulate lovers of Nature

to record and communicate their observations." This hope has been more than realized, and the papers published in the *Journal* since its commencement have borne splendid testimony to the debt owed by naturalists in India to Messrs Aitken and Sterndale.

The late Sir Norman Kinnear related to me (SA) an amusing story connected with EHA's death. The parish newspaper of the obscure little Scottish village to which EHA's father had belonged, thought it its duty to publish a fitting obituary of such a distinguished son of the village. The editor had probably never heard of the man or his interests and writings until his death got reported in outside newspapers. However, not to be outdone by his city confreres he ingeniously added to EHA's laudatory qualifications that "Mr. Aitken who had lived all his life in India was an expert on Frontier Tribes and Bungalow Economy."!

A surprising detail I also gleaned from Sir Norman was that inspite of his humorous and seemingly effortless style EHA was in fact a slow writer and usually had to do a lot of laborious scratching out, re-writing, and meticulous chipping, changing and polishing before he was satisfied with his compositions.

Col. CHARLES SWINHOE M.A. (Oxon) 1836-1923 (Vol. 29: 1042) Anon.

Another of the 8 founders of the Society in 1883. He reached India just after the Mutiny of 1857 and served with the Bombay Staff Corps, evidently largely in Sind, till his retirement in 1893. He went through the Afghan War and was with Lord Roberts in Kandahar. Col. Swinhoe was a man of many parts: a keen shikari of the old school who had accounted for between 50 and 60 tigers, and a devotee of most outdoor sports. He was interested in birds. A collection of 70

skins made by him in Sind and presented to the Society is listed in Vol. 2: 56. There is an incredible statement by E. C. Stuart Baker both in the FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA, Birds (Vol. 5, p. 268) and in his GAME BIRDS OF INDIA, BURMA AND CEYLON (Vol. 2, p. 269) that Col. Swinhoe obtained three specimens of the Coronetted Sandgrouse (*Pterocles coronatus atratus*) at Dhar in the Mhow area of Madhya Pradesh, which is entirely out of the bird's distributional range. An examination of the original collector's label still intact on one of these skins (now in the British Museum collection) shows that the specimens were actually obtained by Col. Swinhoe at "Maiwund" [near Kandahar] in February 1881, therefore evidently during the campaign in Afghanistan. However, it was as an entomologist that he attained international fame. He published on "The Lepidoptera of Karachi and its Neighbourhood" in Volumes 2 and 3 of the *Journal*. On the death of Frederick Moore, Col. Swinhoe was entrusted with the completion of that magnificent work on Indian butterflies LEPIDOPTERA INDICA; the portions dealing with the Lycaenidae (Blues), Hesperidae (Skippers), and a part of the Pieridae (Whites) were compiled entirely by him. But, the Heterocera or Moths is the section in which he excelled; of these he had amassed a collection of 40,000 specimens comprising 7000 different species. It included no less than 400 types of the new species described by him. He remained active to his 87th year, just before which he had completed "A revision of the genera of the family Liparidae" covering some 1130 detailed entries. Col. Swinhoe was universally recognized as an expert on all matters connected with Lepidoptera and was the recipient of many international honours for his services to entomology. He was well known as a lecturer on such subjects as mi-

micry. A paper of his on "Mimicry in Butterflies for Protection" appears in Vol. 2: 169.

JOHN COUSSMAKER ANDERSON 1851-1930
(Vol. 35: 185) by W.S.M.(illard)

Son of General William Coussmaker Anderson; born at Dharwar, Bombay Presidency. Read at Inner Temple and was called to the Bar. Came out to India in 1878 and practised in the Bombay High Court for 25 years. Retired from India in 1901.

J. C. Anderson was one of the eight original founders of the Society. "He was a keen lover of Nature and helped the Society in many ways." In Vol. 4(1) 1889 there is an interesting paper by him entitled "Sporting Rambles round about Simla", and he presented to the Society's museum a large number of specimens of birds and mammals collected by him in the Simla neighbourhood.

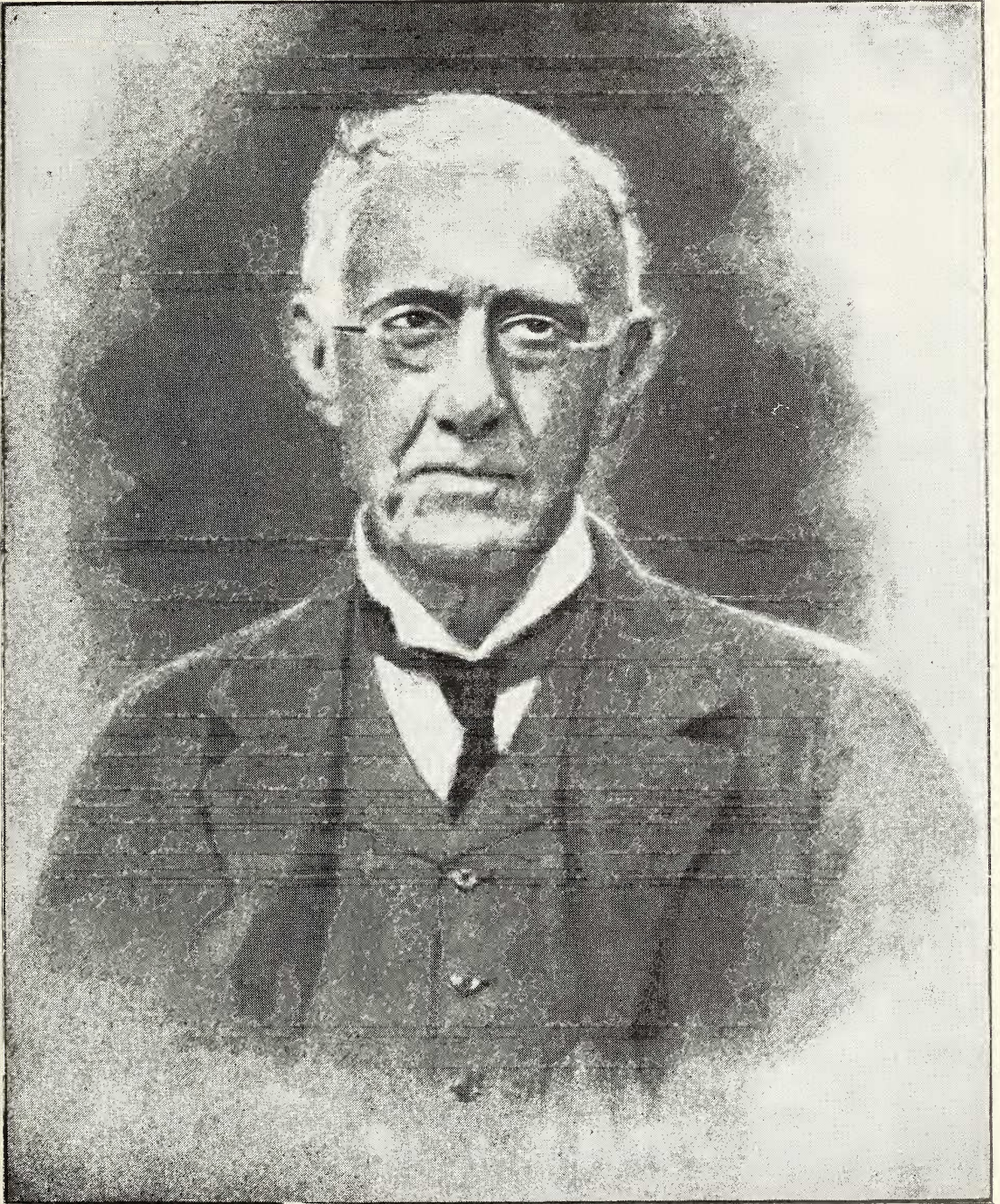
HERBERT MUSGRAVE PHIPSON 1850-1936
(Vol. 39: 152) Anon.

Son of T. W. Phipson, Q.C. of Lincoln's Inn. First came out to India in 1878. Established the firm of Phipson & Co., Wine Merchants, in 1883; left India in 1906. He was in England when the eight original founders of the Society met at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Bombay, on 15 September 1883. He joined the Society on his return from England in the same year, and in January 1884 offered a room in his offices at 18 Forbes Street as a more central place for the Society's meetings and for keeping its collections. The removal of the Society's offices to a central situation in the city, and Phipson's enthusiastic association with it, gave an astonishing impulse to its growth. The need for finding better accommodation for its rapidly increas-

ing collections becoming urgent, Phipson again provided the solution by offering the Society part of the larger premises he had acquired at 6 Apollo Street (now Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road). The Society's collections and offices were transferred there in 1886, and remained until 1958, when the gracious old single-storeyed colonial type building (the former residence of the Chief Justice of Bombay) was due to be pulled down to give way to an ugly 'modern' concrete monster. Phipson's interest in natural history and his zeal for the Society were contagious. He interested his numerous friends in the Society's work and imparted his devotion to the young men who came out to India to assist him in his business. His advice to the young European in India was 'develop a hobby', and to him there was no finer hobby than natural history. Thus commenced, and thus continued, the long association of the Society with the Company which bears Phipson's name. His successors in business took over his post of Honorary Secretary and Editor of the *Journal* and have each in their time made their contribution to the Society's progress.

From March 1886, when he took over the office of Honorary Secretary from E.H. Aitken—more familiarly known from his books as EHA—to April 1906 when he left India, Phipson was the heart and soul of the Society. Initiating and directing its early activities he brought it to vigorous maturity. Through these twenty years he edited the Society's *Journal*—for a year in collaboration with Robert Sterndale, then as sole editor for 15 years, and finally jointly with W. S. Millard, his immediate successor in office.

His business and the management of the Society's affairs left Phipson little time for contributing in print the wide knowledge he had acquired of the Indian natural history of



Herbert Musgrave Phipson
1850-1936



Walter Samuel Millard
1864-1952

which his favourite branch was Snakes. His rare contributions to the *Journal* centre round this subject, and among them is a paper on 'Poisonous Snakes of the Bombay Presidency' (Vol. 2, p. 244). In his day Phipson was the presiding genius of the Society, which had come to be known as 'Phipson's Museum'. He welcomed visitors great and small and taking them round the collections would treat them to a wealth of interesting facts and anecdotes drawn from his wide fund of knowledge and experience. He was charming: always interesting and ever ready with shrewd and amusing comment. The numerous offers of live animals which the Society was receiving gave Phipson the idea of establishing a zoological garden conducted and managed by the Society. What at first seemed a promising venture failed because the Municipality were unwilling to allow the use of the site selected by Phipson for the purpose. In his ambition to provide Bombay with a really fine natural history museum Phipson was more successful; the admirable Natural History section of the Prince of Wales Museum is largely the fruit of his initiative and exertions. Phipson's name as a naturalist is fittingly commemorated by zoologists describing several new discoveries after him, e.g. the sea snake *Hydrophis phipsoni* (= *H. cyanocinctus*), the earth snake *Silybura phipsoni* (= *Uropeltis rubrolineatus*), the scorpion *Isometrus phipsoni*, the whip scorpion *Phrynicus phipsoni* and the galeod spider *Rhagodes phipsoni*. The beautiful flying squirrel *Petinomys phipsoni*, though discovered by the Society's Mammal Survey long after his departure from India, was also named in his honour to perpetuate the memory of his dedicated association with the Society and with Indian natural history. The Society owes a tremendous debt to Phipson for its growth and prosperity, and the prestige it now

enjoys. Few men have striven more earnestly and more continuously to advance such a purely unselfish cause, and few have laboured for the advancement of science and for the general good in a more self-effacing and unobtrusive spirit. Phipson was always ready to help anyone, and as one friend with whom he lived observed 'He monopolized the self-denial of the whole house!'

WALTER SAMUEL MILLARD 1864-1952 (Vol. 50, p. 910—photo) by N. B. Kinnear

Seventh son of Rev. J. H. Millard of Huntingdon, England. Came out to Bombay as assistant to Herbert Musgrave Phipson in his wine business in 1884, by which time Phipson & Co. along with Bombay Natural History Society had shifted to 6 Apollo Street. To reach his office it was necessary to pass through the Society's museum which, in addition to various stuffed animals and jars containing fish and reptiles, generally housed a live cobra or two and a large python. Millard joined the Society soon after his arrival and in 1893 was made assistant editor of the *Journal* though he had doubtless been helping Phipson with the work of the Society for some time previously. On Phipson's retirement from India in 1906, Millard took his place in the Society and as editor of the *Journal* which, under Phipson's editorship, had become the most important scientific publication east of Suez. The Society's journal remained unique among scientific publications in the East since it not only published important scientific papers but also natural history and shikar articles of general interest to readers. It was through Millard's personal interest, and under his careful supervision of details when on leave in England, that Stuart Baker's serial on 'Indian Ducks and their Allies', which had

started in the *Journal* as long ago as 1897 was published by the Society in book form. It proved an immediate success, and ran out of print faster than anticipated. He followed up the success of this first major venture of the Society by the publication of the two other volumes on Game Birds by Stuart Baker, THE PALMS OF INDIA by Fr. E. Blatter and BEAUTIFUL INDIAN TREES by himself and Fr. Blatter. The title of the last is slightly misleading since it includes a number of trees that are not Indian. Though Millard took interest in natural history generally, his particular hobby was gardening, especially the cultivation of flowering trees and shrubs. The grounds of the bungalow where he lived on Malabar Hill, Bombay, were soon developed into a beautiful garden with a great variety of trees and shrubs and a large fernery full of foliage plants, orchids and other tropical flowers. It was the most important private garden at the time, and "guests staying at Government House were frequently sent to inspect its treasures". He took a deep and active interest in beautifying the city by introducing attractive flowering trees in different localities. Among the more outstanding of his introductions are the Burmese *Cassia renigera* and the Padauk *Pterocarpus indicus* with fragrant yellow flowers which, in spite of its name, is also a native of Burma. One tree of the latter species he had planted in the grounds of Bombay University, and such was his continuing interest in his introductions that years after he had left India for good in 1920, he wrote to the Society enquiring how this particular tree was thriving! Millard, on the goading of R. C. Wroughton, a retired Indian Forest Officer, was instrumental in launching the much needed Mammal Survey of India, Burma and Ceylon, 1910-14, when it had to be terminated on the outbreak of World War

I. The vast collections made by the survey in different parts of the erstwhile 'British Indian Empire' provided the basis for the publication of the standard volumes on the mammalian fauna of the subcontinent by Pocock and Ellerman. The starting and success of the Mammal Survey was entirely due to Millard, and only those who were in close association with him at the time have any idea of the amount of time and work he spent in the raising of the money and the organizing of the survey. All this was done in addition to attending to the Society's other business and editing the *Journal*, to say nothing of looking after his own business of Messrs Phipson and Co. and the many other honorary social and charitable activities in which he was involved.

Every visitor to the Society's rooms in Apollo Street will remember the Great Indian Hornbill, better known as 'William' or the 'Office Canary', which lived in a cage behind Millard's chair in Phipson & Co.'s office for 26 years and died in 1920, soon after Millard left India. It is said that death was caused by swallowing a piece of wire, but in the past 'William' had swallowed a lighted cigar without ill effects and Millard's obituarist—a colleague—firmly believed that the loss of his old friend was the principal cause.

By nature Millard was of rather a shy and retiring disposition, but all that vanished when he had anything to do on behalf of the Society. His wife Sybil assisted her husband in many ways, and her presence at the meetings of the Society was always welcome, where her charming personality made the shy visitor feel at ease.

It was the routine in BNHS during Millard's secretaryship that every afternoon at 2.30, after the lunch hour, the accountant Baburao (?) would bring up his Day Book, ledger and vouchers to be checked. Baburao, loaded with

the books, would first timidly push the spring door ajar and peep in. Then, on a nod from Millard he would nervously tiptoe in. As soon as he got to his desk, Millard would look up and over his reading glasses straight into the man's eyes and with mock solemnity declaim "Baburao I suspect you! Whenever you are making an entry in your cash book say to yourself 'Mr. Millard suspects me!' That will keep you out of temptation."

I (SA) personally have very special cause for gratefulness to Millard for the inordinate amount of interest he took in that diffident little schoolboy who once approached him with the mangled carcass of a Yellowthroated Sparrow for identification, in the year 1906 or thereabouts. It was largely the fatherly encouragement I received from him at the time, and continuingly thereafter, that set me off on a lifetime of enjoyable and rewarding bird study.

NORMAN BOYD KINNEAR 1882-1957 (Vol. 54:
928—photo) by S. H. Prater

The son of C. H. G. Kinnear an Edinburgh architect, he started his natural history career as a voluntary worker in the Royal Scottish Museum at Edinburgh under the expert guidance of Dr. Eagle Clarke, the Director, and a distinguished ornithologist. He came out to India in 1907 as the Society's first stipendiary Curator to organize and look after the considerable zoological collections, particularly of vertebrates, that had been amassed by its enthusiastic amateur members from all over the erstwhile 'Indian Empire' during the first quarter century or so of the Society's progress and development. Till then this mass of material, housed in the Society's rooms at 6 Apollo Street, was looked after and maintained by several keen and devoted amateurs

who gave up their evenings after office hours to this work—and one callow youth fresh from school who served as a general factotum!

Kinnear gave invaluable service to the Society by placing the whole of its museum on a sound scientific basis through the re-arrangement, labelling and cataloguing of the collections. His gift for organization and meticulous attention to detail not only benefitted the museum as a whole but also contributed substantially to the training of the small staff working under him. He also provided more effective assistance to members of the Society who sought his help, and generally guided the work in directions which produced greater scientific gains. Kinnear threw himself wholeheartedly into the direction and control of the systematic survey of the Mammals of India, Burma and Ceylon which the Society had started with the preliminary spade-work of Millard. He identified the geographical areas that needed to be worked by the collectors with special coverage of those where earlier mammalogists had obtained Types but which were missing, with a view to replacing them by Topotypes. To him fell the arduous task of assembling the enormous collections obtained by the Mammal Survey; of provisionally identifying and cataloguing them and arranging for their despatch to the British Museum in London. The great advances in systematic mammalogy through the medium of the Survey were largely due to Kinnear's organization and the painstaking care with which the preliminary work was carried out. During World War I when Kinnear was attached to Brigade Headquarters in Bombay as Intelligence Officer, he constantly encouraged members of the Society serving with the Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia to make collections of mammals, birds, reptiles and insects for the Society and kept up a volumi-

nous and painstaking correspondence of helpful instructions, advice and guidance with them. He found time to prepare a pamphlet on the 'Animals of Mesopotamia' for circulating among the officers and men and thus provided an invaluable reference book for all those who were collecting specimens. The scientific results of the large zoological collections so accumulated appeared in a series of papers in the Society's *Journal* between the years 1918 and 1923 and are a fitting tribute to Kinnear's intimate involvement in the enterprise. To his building the Society owes the progress and development of its museum on sound scientific lines, and the staff the training which stood them in such good stead in after years. Kinnear, who during his tenure as Curator also served as one of the editors of the *Journal*, resigned his post in 1919 to take up a special appointment as assistant in the Bird Department of the British Museum where he steadily rose to become Assistant Keeper of Zoology and then Keeper, finally ending up as Director of the Museum in 1947. He had contributed outstandingly to the progress of the Society and is remembered by all who knew him as a kindly and generous helper and friend. Since Kinnear's resignation the Society had undertaken the Vernay Scientific Survey of the Eastern Ghats, an area whose ornithology was very imperfectly known. The important bird collections obtained by this Survey were worked out by him in collaboration with Hugh Whistler, another distinguished ornithologist, and the results are published in the Society's *Journal* under their joint authorship. Kinnear was knighted in 1950.

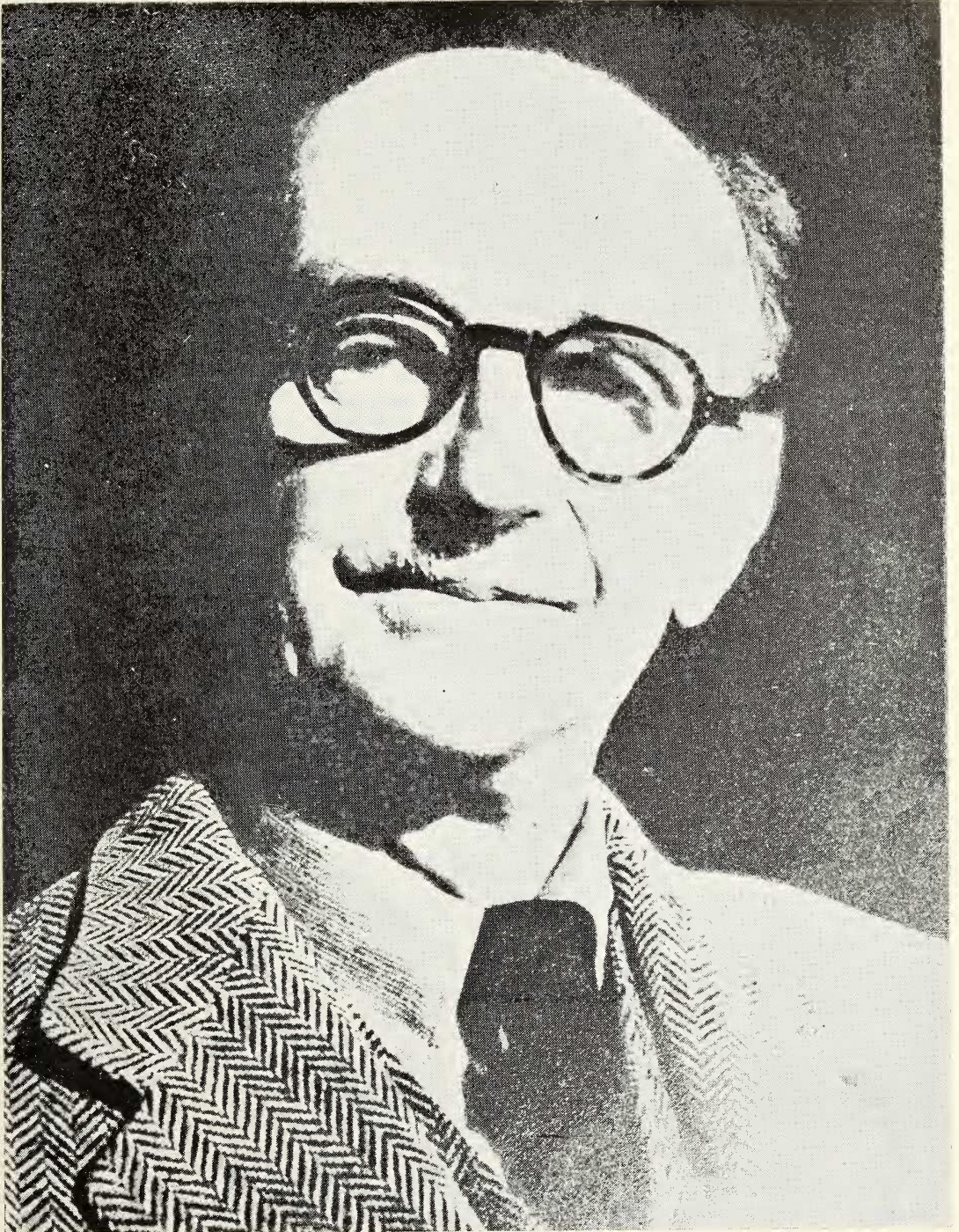
PHILIP McDONELL SANDERSON 1884-1957
(Vol. 54: 930—photo) by R. A. Spence

The son of Launcelot Sanderson a former

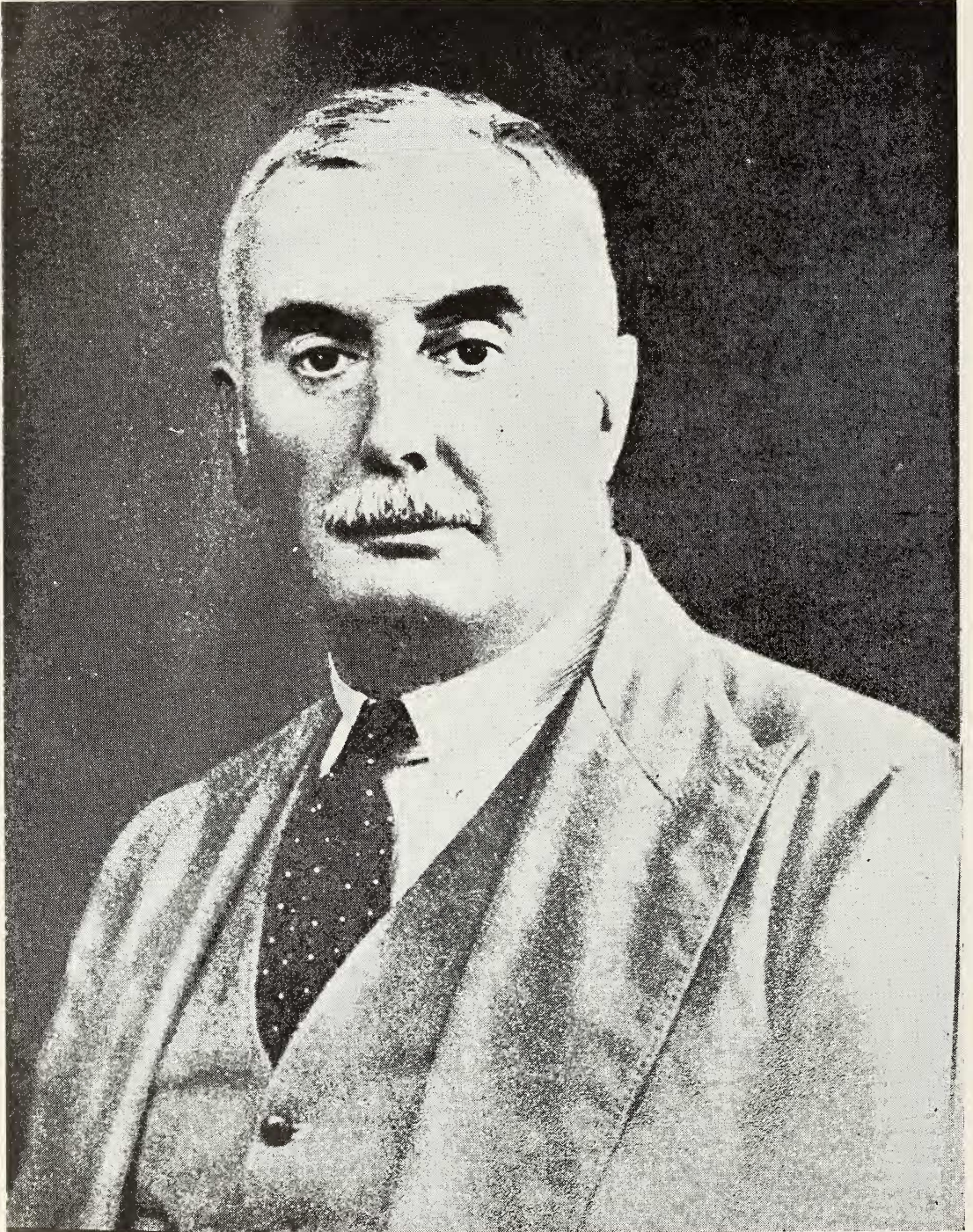
master of Harrow School. He came out to India in 1905 to join the firm of Phipson & Co. the partners in which, H. M. Phipson and W. S. Millard, were responsible for the nurture of the Society's *Journal* and museum. With Phipson and Millard as co-workers, it was natural that Sanderson took an interest in the Natural History Society's affairs, and this was increased when Norman Kinnear came out to work in the Society's museum in 1907. He joined up on the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and saw service in Mesopotamia where he was badly wounded during the trench battles for the relief of Kut. He was a popular officer, and "Because he was so thin he was known among his men as 'Pull-through' and to us, from the resemblance of his nose to the Great Hornbill in Phipson's office, as 'The Bird'."

When W. S. Millard left India in March 1920, Sanderson joined R. A. Spence as Joint Honorary Secretary of the Society and, with Norman Kinnear, the three edited the *Journal*. In 1934 he became the sole Honorary Secretary and edited the *Journal* with the help of S. H. Prater and later, Sálím Ali. Sanderson was very keen on Prater's work to make a real Museum of Natural History in the Prince of Wales Museum, and he had the privilege of running the arrangements for the Golden Jubilee of the Society in 1933 and the formal opening of the Natural History section. He left India in 1939 on the outbreak of the Second War, and later took over from Millard as the Society's representative in England.

Sanderson was a good natured extrovert, hail-fellow-well-met with all visitors to the Society's rooms, and in many ways a useful public relations man for the Society. But his uninhibited light-hearted banter sometimes unwittingly landed the Society in awkward situations, as for instance in the case of the long



Philip McDonell Sanderson
1884-1957



Reginald A. Spence
1880-1961

forgotten review of a pot-boiler shikar book published in the *Journal* which led to the Society and the reviewer having to pay considerable legal damages to the allegedly aggrieved author years afterwards! He was a keen yachtsman and small game hunter, but left no significant mark as a naturalist or in his capacity as Honorary Secretary since he left the running of the Society largely in the able hands of the Curator, S. H. Prater.

STANLEY HENRY PRATER 1890-1960 (Vol. 57: 637—photo) by Sálím Ali

Born in the Nilgiris, died in London, the son of William Prater, a coffee planter in S. India. From his early schooldays in Khandala he came under the influence and tutelage of such distinguished Jesuit naturalists as the Rev. Fathers Dreckmann (snakes), Assmuth (termites) and Blatter (plants), who fostered his interest in natural history. Prater joined the Society's service in 1907, first working under the guidance of E. Comber and later as assistant to the first stipendiary Curator, N. B. Kinnear. After a 4-years' probationary period following the latter's resignation in 1919 Prater was confirmed as Curator of the Society and of the Natural History Section of the Prince of Wales Museum which was then under its management. To qualify him for the stewardship of a really first class natural history museum, which the Prince of Wales aimed to become, he was deputed by the Board of Trustees in 1923 to the United Kingdom to learn the art of modern taxidermy, and in 1927 he was again sent abroad to study the techniques of modern natural history museum exhibition and management in England and America. The fruits of all the skill and aptitude he thus acquired are evidenced by the artistically designed exhibi-

tion galleries and the superb dioramas, in the Natural History Section, acclaimed to be the finest in the East. The outstanding progress made by the Society between the years 1920 and 1937 was due entirely to the dynamic combination of two dedicated personalities, namely Sir Reginald Spence and S. H. Prater, the former as Honorary Secretary of the Society and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Prince of Wales Museum, and the latter as the versatile Curator. He possessed the gift of transmitting the knowledge and experience gained abroad to his co-workers and staff in a way that extracted their whole-hearted co-operation and helped to achieve the highest results. The Natural History Section is a standing monument to Prater's genius. He was fortunate in having as his lieutenant an exceptionally competent naturalist and skilful craftsman in the person of Charles McCann. McCann readily lapped up the imported techniques, adapted them to local needs and conditions, and put them into masterly execution in the museum's galleries.

For nearly a quarter of a century prior to his retirement in 1948 Prater's name was almost synonymous with the Bombay Natural History Society. For the last 27 years of his service he was the executive editor of the *Journal* and was largely responsible for the high standard and international recognition it earned as the foremost natural history periodical in Asia. He was a voracious reader, particularly of natural history books and journals, and had a flair for guzzling through heavy scientific literature, then picking out the essentials of what he read and translating the substance into simple jargon-free language for the layman. He was blessed with a remarkably retentive memory and could usually lay his hands on anything he had read on a subject, maybe years before, without hesitation

or fumbling. Prater's forte was compilation—an art in which he excelled. He wrote in a readable, easy and often humorous style, and his many contributions in the *Journal* convey an idea of the wide range of his natural history interests and his versatility. The familiarity he acquired with the Society's natural history collections during his long stewardship gave him a wonderful all round grasp of Indian animals. Though his own leanings were more particularly towards mammals, birds and snakes he was equally at home with almost all other groups, and could not only name straightway practically any specimen brought in by members, but usually also give something of their distribution and habits. His intimate involvement with mammals during the Society's Mammal Survey between 1911 and 1923, both as a field collector and while handling specimens as they came in from the field or back from the British Museum after identification, accounts largely for the authenticity and success of his BOOK OF INDIAN ANIMALS, first published by the Society in 1948 and now in the 4th edition. The crying need for wildlife preservation in India was brought home to the public and the government largely by his able exposition in the Introduction to the admirable series on 'Wild Life Preservation in India' which he initiated in the *Journal* in 1935, and by his constant 'plugging' of the problem through numerous well-informed editorials, and newspaper articles before and since. Prater was in truth a remarkable man—capable, versatile, sociable, ambitious, and a striver after perfection as many of his handiworks clearly show. His sociable disposition, keen sense of humour and considerateness for his subordinates and staff endeared him to all who came in contact with him. He will deservedly enjoy an honoured place in the annals of the

Society as one of its most stalwart and capable builders.

REGINALD A. SPENCE 1880-1961 (Vol. 58: 776) by Editors, JBNHS

Came out to Bombay in 1901 as assistant in the firm of Phipson & Co. then under the management of H. M. Phipson and W. S. Millard. From the very beginning of the Society Phipsons have been closely associated with it. In keeping with this tradition Spence took an active interest in the Society's welfare, and on Millard's retirement from India in 1920 took over as Honorary Secretary, continuing to serve in this capacity until he left India in 1934. During this period the Society expanded its activities in several fields including the establishment of the Natural History Section in the Prince of Wales Museum. This was achieved predominantly through the untiring efforts of Sir Reginald Spence who was also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Prince of Wales Museum. The negotiations begun by his predecessors H. M. Phipson and W. S. Millard for the transfer to the Government of Bombay of the financial responsibility for the housing and proper care of the Society's collections were finalized by him, and detailed plans for the beautiful new Natural History wing of the Prince of Wales Museum were drawn up before he left India though he was not here to see them actually carried out. Spence's genial personality won him many friends, and the esteem in which he was held by the public and the Government was of immense value to the Society. Spence was one of the editors of the *Journal* from 1907 to 1933. Towards the end, owing to the increasing demands on his time by business and public-spirited social work he had to leave much of the actual editing to his col-



Norman Boyd Kinnear
(1882-1957)

J. BOMBAY NAT. HIST. SOC. 75
Sálim Ali : BNHS



Stanley Henry Prater
(1890-1960)

leagues. His outstanding contributions to the *Journal*, both written jointly with S. H. Prater, are 'The fish supply of the west coast of India' (Vol. 34: 973, 35: 77) and 'Game fishes of Bombay, the Deccan and the neighbouring districts of the Bombay Presidency' (Vol. 36: 29). He was knighted in the year 1926 and left India to settle in England in 1934.

(To be continued)